



SOCIAL INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is viewed as an effort to transform the institutional legalities of a democratic society in to reality in the field of education. But, Inclusive Education is still subject matters of national and international debate, but this system of education has many many advantages over the present system of education and is an effective system for ensuring 'Right to Education' for all and equal educational opportunities. The present paper has highlighted some of the issues related with the social inclusion in education and for the inclusive growth of the society.

KEYWORDS : Inclusive Education, Social Inclusion, Special Education, Integrated Education.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusion in education is an approach to educating students with special educational needs. Under the inclusion approach, students with special needs spend most or all of their time with non-disabled students. Inclusion rejects the use of special schools or classrooms to separate students with disabilities from students without disabilities.

Inclusive set up is a place where everyone belongs, is accepted, supports and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met. Inclusive education is based on fundamental human rights. The human rights movement resulted ultimately in the imperative to value and treats everyone equally and according to need. Education is a fundamental human right, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), Children with or without disabilities have the same rights to educational opportunities under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The world is an inclusive community; therefore, it is very important for children to grow within communities that represent the kind of world in which they will live when they finish school.

Hence, education as human rights; especially the disabled children has been recognized in various national and international conferences including Universal Declaration of Human Right, Convention on the Rights of the child (Article 28), World conference on Education for all (1990), the Salamanca Conference (1994) etc. and other agencies all over the world have gathered to review and analyse their efforts towards the goal of "Education for all".

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education differs from the 'integration' or 'mainstreaming' approach of education, which tended to be concerned principally with disability and special educational needs, and learners changing or becoming 'ready for' deserving of accommodation by the mainstream. By contrast, inclusion is about the child's right to participate and the school's duty to accept the child.

A premium is placed upon full participation by students with disabilities and upon respect for their social, civil, and educational rights. Feeling included is not limited to physical and cognitive disabilities, but also includes the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age, and of other forms of human differences.

Inclusive education is a step forward from integrated or special school system. In the special school education disabled children's were either denied access to public schools or permitted to attend in isolated settings. Whereas in the integrated approach, which phase began in the 1970s the disabled's were a part of the general education but not properly allowed with normal classroom children. Inclusive education goes one step further. In this approach, the

education for specially needed children is an integral part of the general education classroom system, which started in the mid 1980s. Inclusive education, in this way, is to be viewed as the reality stock of services for the children with disabilities in India. We can also clearly distinguishes the development of social inclusion in education by studying comparative development of firstly, Special Education, which is an old notion for exceptional or disabled children. In this approach, a separate system away from mainstreaming, i.e. isolates the disabled children from normal children. This special education is somehow clinical and based on the laws of discrimination, here right of children not recognized. Secondly, Integrated Education approach for disabled children, is a system attached with mainstream educational institution, same school with normal children but, here right of children recognized not realized. Thirdly and very recent historical development is Inclusive Education, is a single inclusive system, i.e. disabled children is taught with the normal children's same classroom, right of children recognized and realized; thus, social inclusion of education granted.

POLICY PERSPECTIVES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In 1994, UNESCO organized an International Conference in Salamanca of Spain to consider the fundamental policy shifts required to promote the approach of inclusive education, namely enabling schools to serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs. The conference adopted the 'Salamanca statement on principles, policy and practice in Special Need Education and a framework of Action.' It is approved by 92 countries; India also adopted this approach. This Salamanca approach reflected thinking and practice from a different perspective- not from disabled activists, but from the professionals working in schools, trying to find ways to enable all children to learn together.

Salamanca statement encouraged and guided to implement Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan launched by Govt. of India has the goal of eight year elementary schooling for all children (including disabled children) of the age group of 6- 14 years. Children with disabilities in the age group of 15-18 years are provided free education under Integrated Education for Disabled Children scheme. The key objectives of RTE Act of 2009 and(amendment in RTE Act 2010) is Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) has three important aspects are access, enrolment and retention of all children including children with disabilities. So, successful implementation of RTE Act will be depended on successful social inclusion in education with normal children.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Students with special needs in general education classrooms continues to receive significant attention on a philosophical level. The needs of a wide range of students is a daunting challenge for general educators in schools today. The critical issue underlying successful social inclusion is the acceptance of diversity. Unfortunately, this is not likely to happen easily and without major

changes in the way many schools operate.

The real challenge is a lot harder and more complicated than we thought. Neither special nor general education alone has either the capacity or the vision to challenge and change the deep-rooted assumptions that separate and track children and youths according to presumptions about ability, achievement, and eventual social contribution. Meaningful change will require nothing less than a joint effort to reinvent schools to be more accommodating to all dimensions of human diversity. Positive steps toward successful inclusion can be taken on a classroom-by-classroom and school-by-school basis. It is important to remember that one teacher can have a dramatic effect on the lives of students who are different and who have learning challenges.

Developing effective inclusive classrooms has relevance for student's immediate needs as well as their long-term needs. In the short term, students need to learn in settings along with their peers (that is, inclusive schooling). In the long term, we want these students, as adults, to leave, work, and play along with their peers in their home communities (that is, inclusive living). Without the opportunity to grow and learn with nondisabled peers throughout their lives, individuals with disabilities will not be able to accomplish these goals.

PERCEPTION OF INCLUSION

A significant amount of discussion has surrounded the movement toward inclusion; On the philosophical level, only a few arguments have been levied against this movement. It is, however, primarily on the implementation level that concerns have arisen. Research studies focussing on attitudes towards social inclusion have involved two primary groups: general education teachers and parents.

Previously conducted research studies in India as well as abroad about perceptions of mainstreaming and social inclusion, by analysing researches, reflected that many current issues related to responsibility including students with special needs in general education settings. It is found that nearly two-thirds of general education classroom teachers support, for the most part, the concept of social inclusion. But surprisingly, teachers are in favor of inclusion only but many teachers expressed concerns or a lack of willingness to teach students of disabilities in their own normal classes. Teacher's fears seem to arise not so much from concerns about the philosophy of inclusion as from concerns and doubts about teachers' own teaching abilities as they relate to specific students'. Research evidences found parents' attitudes about inclusion very greatly. For parents of students with disabilities, the reaction to the social inclusion movement is mixed. Only about one-fourth of these parents who participated in the research activities during 1985 to 1995 in India as well as abroad, if we analyse their opinion found that these parents thought that students with learning problems should be included in the same classes with nondisabled students.

These attitudinal researches provides a glimpse of the task faced by professionals who support teaching students with special needs in inclusive settings. First, accurate information about inclusion, in general, and individuals who need to be included, must be distributed to teachers, parents, and the general public. Yet the greatest challenge will be changing an educational system that presents great barriers to inclusion since teachers' perceptions, attitudes and opportunities for collaboration are directly related to the success of inclusion.

CRITICAL DIMENSIONS OF INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

The concept of inclusion purports that students with special needs can be active, valued, fully participating members of a school community in which diversity is viewed as the norm and high quality education is provided through a combination of meaningful curriculum, effective teaching, and necessary supports. Anything less is unacceptable.

Five essential features characterize successful social inclusion of students with special needs. They are, (i) a sense of community and social acceptance, (ii) an appreciation of student diversity, (iii) attention to curricular all needs, (iv) effective management and instruction, and (v) personal support and collaboration. When in place, they make the general education classroom the best possible placement option.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

In desirable inclusive settings, every students is valued and nurtured. Such settings promote an environment in which all members are seen as equal, all have opportunity to contribute, and all contributions are respected.

Students with special needs are truly included in their classroom communities only when they are appreciated by their teachers and socially accepted by their classmates. An understanding teacher more effectively meets students' instructional and curricular needs, and social acceptance among classmates contributes to students' self-perception of value. Both of these goals are equally critical to creating effective inclusive settings and responsible learning environments. It is imperative that we address the need for acceptance, belonging, and friendship. Teachers play a very critical role in creating a positive classroom environment. Three qualities are essential to establishing a successful inclusive setting: teacher attitude, teacher expectations, and teacher competence.

APPRECIATION OF STUDENT DIVERSITY

To maximize learning, a teacher needs to understand each individual in the classroom as well as possible. In addition to recognize and responding to each student's educational needs, teachers must be sensitive to the cultural, community, and family values that can have an impact on a student's educational experience. For instance, the nature of teacher-student interactions may be directly affected by certain cultural factors, or the type of home-school contact will be dictated by how the family wants to interact with the school. Different types of diversity exist within classroom settings. It is important to recognize and celebrate each one.

All students can flourish in an atmosphere in which diversity is recognized, opportunities exist to better understand its various forms, and differences are appreciated. All students benefit from being in an inclusive classroom. Students learn tolerance and the ability to accept differences in each other, as well as having opportunities to benefit from cooperative learning and other alternative instructional strategies.

ATTENTION TO CURRICULAR NEEDS

A student's learning and life needs should drive programmatic efforts and decisions. Good teachers vary their curricula to meet the needs of the students. While some students with disabilities included in general classrooms may be able to deal effectively with the curricula, many need substantial modifications. Fortunately, curricular needs can usually be addressed within the context of the general educational classroom.

Curricular concerns include 2 issues: (i) content that is meaningful to students in a current and future sense, and (ii) approaches and materials that work best for them. Dealing with the first issue helps ensure that what students need to learn (i.e., knowledge and skills acquisition) is provided within the inclusive settings. The second issue involves choosing how to teach relevant content. The provision of appropriate curriculum appeared to be meaningfully associated with success in general education classes. Teachers can modify the academic level of the content and focus more on functional objectives, reduce the content to a manageable amount, and change how students are asked to demonstrate mastery of the content.

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND INSTRUCTION

Another essential component of successful inclusive settings is a set

of classroom practices conducive to learning for students with a range of needs. These practices include four elements: successful classroom management, effective instructional techniques, appropriate accommodative practices, and instructional flexibility.

SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Classrooms that encourage learning are characterized by sound organizational and management systems. Classroom management- including physical, procedural, instructional, and behaviour management the stage for the smooth delivery of instruction.

CONCLUSION

The greatest barriers to social inclusion are caused by society, not by particular medical impairments. Negative attitudes towards differences result in discrimination and can lead to a serious barrier to learning.

In this regard proper awareness to be given to the members of the stake holders associated with inclusive institutions; By Organizing seminars, workshops, special talks, publishing articles, conducting research works etc etc in this particular fields.

The new challenge of inclusion is to create schools in which our day to day efforts no longer assume that a particular text, activity, or teaching mode will 'work' to support any particular student's learning. Because the inclusive classroom contains many students with diverse needs, teachers must be equipped to address an array of challenges. To do so effectively, teachers need to create classroom communities that embrace diversity and that are responsive to individual needs.

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